

PINK AND BLACK ATTACK #1



*front and back artwork and back poem by
jasmine*



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PINK AND BLACK ATTACK EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE STATEMENT

Welcome to Pink and Black Attack, a queer anarchist periodical based out of Olympia, WA. We proudly join the recent wave of queer organizing and action with this publication, with which we hope to provide news, theory, analysis and art relevant to queer anarchists. In short, this zine is by us and for us. We are not affiliated with any organization. The opinions in the pieces that follow are those of their authors, and we as a collective do not necessarily endorse everything that is printed. That being said, we do think that the following pieces are valuable and worth reading.

Our next issue is due out in May. If you'd like to submit anything to the zine, please send it to pinkandblackattack@riseup.net by April 15th. Art should be in black and white.

In solidarity-

Pink and Black Attack Collective

Points of Unity:

We are queer anarchists. We oppose the state and capitalism in all their forms.

We are anti-assimilationist. We refuse to beg the state for equality.

We actively oppose heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, patriarchy, classism, and white supremacy.

We believe in collective liberation for all people.

We believe in revolutionary solidarity with everyone in the struggle against the state and against the domination of capitalism. We especially support our comrades who face legal trouble because of their struggles.

BASH BACK! MEMBER AND MAY DAY ARRESTEE SENTENCED IN OLYMPIA

Active community member and friend Forest Student was sentenced for events alleged to have happened on May Day 2008 in Olympia, Washington.

Forest took an Alfred plea bargain (saying he didn't commit the crime, but is pleading guilty because there is a chance he would lose in court.), pleading a felony and a gross misdemeanor down to two gross misdemeanors. Forest's plea does not implicate anyone else.

The court said that Forest ran alongside someone who stole an undercover police officer's cell phone and then tried to trade clothes with this person. Forest denies this. Forest maintains that he was running away from a cop who had pointed a gun at him.

At the sentencing, Forest told the judge that he is a stable person, married and has a lease on a house. He talked about the work he does for his communities, including, but not limited to, sexual assault prevention. Forest's lawyer asked the judge not to give him a harsher sentence because he was protesting when the arrest happened, and asked that the judge not silence and sentence political dissent, which is what the judge did.

For two gross misdemeanors, Forest Student of Olympia, WA was sentenced to 60 Days in jail. Forest was arrested for political reasons, charged for political reasons, convicted for political reasons, and sentenced for political reasons.

Forest will be serving the time via work release which means he has to sleep at the jail every night for 60 consecutive days and will only be allowed out during the day to go to work. Forest has 30 days to start his jail time.

Forest is an active community member in Olympia, WA. He works in support of anti-imperialist struggles, sexual assault prevention/destroying rape culture, is active in port militarization resistance, organizes against police and police violence and is an active member of the NW queer and trans community. Forest has court fees (totaling \$700) to cover and rent to pay while he is in jail. If you can at all support monetarily it would be greatly appreciated. If you can't, your kind words and thoughts will be cherished just as much. Support your community.

In Solidarity,

Friends of Forest

For questions or contributions please contact FreeForest-Fund@yahoo.com

ANNOUNCING:

NATIONAL RADICAL QUEER CONVERGENCE

MAY 28TH-31ST

Anarcha-Queers! Trannies! Fairies! Perverts! Sex-Workers! Sex-Radicals!

Allies!

Bash Back! is ecstatic to announce a national radical queer convergence to take place in Chicago, May 28th through May 31st of 2009!

We're pleased to invite all radical queers to join us for a weekend of debauchery and mischief. The last weekend of May will prove to be four solid days of workshops, discussions, performances, games, dancing and street action!

We'll handle the food and the housing. Ya'll bring the orgy, riot, and decadence!

We're looking for folks to facilitate discussions, put on workshops, organize caucuses, share games, tell stories, get heavy in some theory, or bottom-line a dance party. More specifically we're looking for workshops themed around queer and trans liberation, anti-racism, confronting patriarchy, sex work, ableism, self defense, DIY mental and sexual health, radical history, pornography, or queer theory. We are also looking for copious amounts of glitter, safer sex products, zines, home-made sex toys, balaclavas, pink and black flags, sequins, bondage gear, rad porn, flowers, strap-ons, and assorted dumpstered goodies. You down?

To RSVP, volunteer for a workshop, get more information, or send us dirty pictures,

email -

radicalqueer2009@gmail.com

and check out - BashBackNews.WordPress.Com

Lubing up the social war,

Bash Back!

an excerpt from "towards the queerest insurrection"

by the mary nardini gang

VII

THE PERSPECTIVE OF QUEERS WITHIN THE HET-ERONORMATIVE WORLD IS A LENS THROUGH WHICH WE CAN CRITIQUE AND ATTACK THE APPARATUS OF CAPITALISM. WE CAN ANALYZE THE WAYS IN WHICH MEDICINE, THE PRISON SYSTEM, THE CHURCH, THE STATE, MARRIAGE, THE MEDIA, BORDERS, THE MILITARY AND POLICE ARE USED TO CONTROL AND DESTROY US. MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE CAN USE THESE CASES TO ARTICULATE A COHESIVE CRITICISM OF EVERY WAY THAT WE ARE ALIENATED AND DOMINATED. QUEER IS A POSITION FROM WHICH TO ATTACK THE NORMATIVE - MORE, A POSITION FROM WHICH TO UNDERSTAND AND ATTACK THE WAYS IN WHICH NORMAL IS REPRODUCED AND REITERATED. IN DESTABILIZING AND PROBLEMATIZING NORMALCY, WE CAN DESTABILIZE AND BECOME A PROBLEM FOR THE TOTALITY. THE HISTORY OF ORGANIZED QUEERS WAS BORNE OUT OF THIS POSITION. THE MOST MARGINALIZED - TRANSFOLK, PEOPLE OF COLOR, SEX WORKERS - HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE CATALYSTS FOR RIOTOUS EXPLOSIONS OF QUEER RESISTANCE. THESE EXPLOSIONS HAVE BEEN COUPLED WITH A RADICAL ANALYSIS WHOLEHEARTEDLY ASSERTING THAT THE LIBERATION FOR QUEER PEOPLE IS INTRINSICALLY TIED TO THE ANNIHILATION OF CAPITALISM AND THE STATE. IT IS NO WONDER, THEN, THAT THE FIRST PEOPLE TO PUBLICLY SPEAK OF SEXUAL LIBERATION IN THIS COUNTRY WERE ANARCHISTS, OR THAT THOSE IN THE LAST CENTURY WHO STRUGGLED FOR QUEER

LIBERATION ALSO SIMULTANEOUSLY STRUGGLED AGAINST CAPITALISM, RACISM AND PATRIARCHY AND EMPIRE. THIS IS OUR HISTORY.

VIII

IF HISTORY PROVES ANYTHING, IT IS THAT CAPITALISM HAS A TREACHEROUS RECUPERATIVE TENDENCY TO PACIFY RADICAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS. IT WORKS RATHER SIMPLY, ACTUALLY. A GROUP GAINS PRIVILEGE AND POWER WITHIN A MOVEMENT, AND SHORTLY THEREAFTER SELL THEIR COMRADES OUT. WITHIN A COUPLE YEARS OF STONEWALL, AFFLUENT-GAY-WHITE-MALES HAD THOROUGHLY MARGINALIZED EVERYONE THAT HAD MADE THEIR MOVEMENT POSSIBLE AND ABANDONED THEIR REVOLUTION WITH THEM.

IT WAS ONCE THAT TO BE QUEER WAS TO BE IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH THE FORCES OF CONTROL AND DOMINATION. NOW, WE ARE FACED WITH A CONDITION OF UTTER STAGNATION AND STERILITY. AS ALWAYS, CAPITAL RECUPERATED BRICK-THROWING STREET QUEENS INTO SUITED POLITICIANS AND ACTIVISTS. THERE ARE LOG-CABIN-REPUBLICANS AND "STONEWALL" REFERS TO GAY DEMOCRATS. THERE ARE GAY ENERGY DRINKS AND A "QUEER" TELEVISION STATION THAT WAGES WAR ON THE MINDS, BODIES AND ESTEEM OF IMPRESSIONABLE YOUTH. THE "LGBT" POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT HAS BECOME A FORCE OF ASSIMILATION, GENTRIFICATION, CAPITAL AND STATE-POWER. GAY IDENTITY HAS BECOME BOTH A MARKETABLE COMMODITY

AND A DEVICE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM STRUGGLE AGAINST DOMINATION.

NOW THEY DON'T CRITIQUE MARRIAGE, MILITARY OR THE STATE. RATHER, WE HAVE CAMPAIGNS FOR QUEER ASSIMILATION INTO EACH. THEIR POLITICS IS ADVOCACY FOR SUCH GRIEVOUS INSTITUTIONS, RATHER THAN THE ANNIHILATION OF THEM ALL. "GAYS CAN KILL POOR PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD AS WELL AS STRAIGHT PEOPLE" "GAYS CAN HOLD THE REIGNS OF THE STATE AND CAPITAL AS WELL AS STRAIGHT PEOPLE" "WE ARE JUST LIKE YOU". ASSIMILATIONISTS WANT NOTHING LESS THAN TO CONSTRUCT THE HOMOSEXUAL AS NORMAL - WHITE, MONOGAMOUS, WEALTHY, 25 CHILDREN, SUVs WITH A WHITE PICKET FENCE. THIS CONSTRUCTION, OF COURSE, REPRODUCES THE STABILITY OF HETEROSEXUALITY, WHITENESS, PATRIARCHY, THE GENDER BINARY, AND CAPITALISM ITSELF.

IF WE GENUINELY WANT TO MAKE RUINS OF THIS TOTALITY, WE NEED TO MAKE A BREAK. WE DON'T NEED INCLUSION INTO MARRIAGE, THE MILITARY AND THE STATE. WE NEED TO END THEM. NO MORE GAY POLITICIANS, CEOs AND COPS. WE NEED TO SWIFTLY AND IMMEDIATELY ARTICULATE A WIDE GULF BETWEEN THE POLITICS OF ASSIMILATION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION. WE NEED TO REDISCOVER OUR RIOTOUS INHERITANCE AS QUEER ANARCHISTS. WE NEED TO DESTROY CONSTRUCTIONS OF NORMALCY, AND CREATE INSTEAD A POSITION BASED IN OUR ALIENATION FROM THIS NORMALCY, AND ONE CAPABLE OF DISMANTLING IT. WE MUST USE THESE POSITIONS TO INSTIGATE BREAKS, NOT JUST FROM THE ASSIMILATIONIST MAINSTREAM, BUT FROM CAPITALISM ITSELF. THESE POSITIONS CAN BECOME TOOLS OF A SOCIAL FORCE READY TO CREATE A COMPLETE RUPTURE WITH THIS WORLD.

OUR BODIES HAVE BEEN BORN INTO CONFLICT WITH THIS SOCIAL ORDER. WE NEED TO DEEPEN THAT

CONFLICT AND MAKE IT SPREAD.

A PREOCCUPATION WITH HANDS

BY BILLIE

**the first girl I got with
communicated multitudes
the first time
she grabbed my hand
I followed her home
tipsy**

**the few nights I spent in her bed
she told stories with her hands
we wrote stories with our hands**

**she said she liked the notion
of pretty girls in her bed
she seemed to have the confidence
I lacked**

**we walked to the coffee shop
boldly I clasped her hand
as we approached our friends
timidly
she dropped mine**



6.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

November 17, 2008

Hello everyone. My name is Saffo and I am trans. Some of you may know me by my birth name, Fokion. As many of you will already know, to many trans people, changing our names is an important rite of passage. Coming out as trans, choosing a new name and transitioning my identity has been a difficult, beautiful, emotionally exhausting, revitalizing and spiritually empowering process. Some of you who have known me for years have struggled to remember to call me by my new name, and by my new preferred pronoun. I assure you that it's been even more difficult for me, adjusting to a new name, to a new relationship with the world. But it is so important and I appreciate the many people in my life who have supported me through this struggle, as well as the countless many trans and gender variant people who have struggled and fought so hard before me—many of whom have sacrificed their lives for the chance to name themselves. After all, today is the day of remembrance, so I must remember with a sense of gratitude and humility those who have fought before me and made the ultimate sacrifice.

So what's in a name? Many of us live out our lives with names that were given to us by our parents, which may or may not have any real meaning or significance. Your name is perhaps the most important, most deeply engrained social marker you will have in your life. It claims to define you—and yet most people did not choose their name, or may not feel that it has any real meaning to them. Coming out as trans has given me a sense of solidarity with people everywhere who have chosen to rename themselves. Similarly, it is through this politics of naming that we are also able to name the forces of violence that oppress us. Transphobia, Heterosexism, Racism, Classism, Imperialism, Ageism, Ableism, Capitalism, Sexual Assault and Violence, the Prison Industrial Complex. The list goes on. Naming the systems of violence that oppress us and those around us is a vital first step in our various struggles for liberation. And so it is through naming both ourselves, our communities, and the forces of violence that oppress us that we are able to fight back.

So what's in my name? I chose the name Saffo for many reasons. Those of you who know

me probably know that I am half Greek. My birth name, Fokion, is an ancient Greek name. According to Greek culture, a parent is supposed to name their child after her or his grandparent, who is supposed to be named after a saint. My mother, however, a devout atheist, chose to defy tradition, giving me a name that was ancient Greek. I was always proud of this. I was drawn to the name Saffo because it is not the name of a saint. Furthermore, for those who don't know, Saffo was the ancient poet from the island of Lesbos who wrote love poems to other women. Hence where the world "Lesbian" comes from. My choice of name reflected a desire to connect my culture with my queerness, while simultaneously resisting Christian hegemony.

With that said, we are here today to remember the countless many trans and gender non-conforming people who have been slaughtered by the systemic violence of transphobia. By an interesting coincidence, today happens to be an important day for me both as a tranny and as a greek. Today is the 35th anniversary of the Athens Polytechnic Massacre. Let me explain. In 1967, as part of the cold war, the United States over

threw the Greek government and installed a military dictatorship in Greece. In November, 1973, students at Athens Polytechnic went on strike against the junta and took over the school. The government responded on November 17th by crushing down the gate of the school with a tank, and slaughtering the students. November 17th is an important date to Greek people—a powerful reminder of violence of the state and US imperialism. Thirty-five years ago today, the United States slaughtered Greek students organizing to overthrow a repressive right-wing regime that the US had installed. This is, of course, not a unique experience. The United States has covertly and overtly enacted tremendous violence all over the world from Manifest Destiny, to the Vietnam War, to Pinochet, to the war in Iraq, to the Spanish-American war, to the occupation of Palestine, to Free Trade... and that's just the beginning... As we speak right now, we stand only a couple blocks away from Textron world headquarters—a company that manufactures cluster bombs used to kill Iraqi civilians. We are living here in the belly of the beast—the United States empire, the most powerful force of death and destruction in the history of the world.

So what does this have to do with the reason we are here today? I wanted to bring up November 17th because today is a powerful day for me, on the 35th anniversary of a date that has been ingrained in my head since I was a child, to be recognizing my queer sisters and brothers who have fallen as part of a different, but related struggle. Some people might say, “but those are separate issues.” And I would respond, when you're rising up to fight for your life, there are no “separate issues.” This touches on something all-too-often left out in mainstream queer discourse—the connection between state violence and violence against queer and trans people. While outside our borders the United States asserts its violent hegemony through war, espionage, secret prisons, the so-called drug war, and the World Bank and IMF; inside our borders we have the largest prison population in the history of the world. There is an enormously profitable industry built around imprisoning people in the US. This is the prison industrial complex. When private prison companies began losing money recently, the state responded by targeting immigrants in order that prison companies could increase their profits. Immigrants, communities of col-

or, queer, trans and gender non-conforming people are favorite targets of the prison industrial complex.

Within prison walls, queer, trans, and gender non-conforming people are routinely subject to rape, humiliation, and other forms of brutality—far more so than our straight and cisgender peers. Furthermore, trans people are often placed in the wrong-gender section, or are kept in solitary confinement, and are frequently denied access to medical treatment. This is state violence against our community. It is important to recognize that the mechanisms of state violence that terrorize queer and trans people are some of the same that terrorize immigrants and communities of color. We must recognize that different oppressions function differently, as our identities function differently, but ultimately we have more to gain from building solidarity between our various movements. Some people, however, stubbornly refuse to recognize the importance of these connections.

Perhaps nowhere is this hypocrisy more clear than with the issue of hate-crimes legislation. Many trans people live in communities or neighborhoods that are not supportive. We live with the knowledge that, were we to be attacked,

our neighbors may not give a shit about us. This is, in part, a result of the isolated capitalist system in which we live. Many people don't notice their neighbors, don't feel supported by any sort of community, and hence, when violence happens, the only recourse we have is the police. The same police force that raided stonewall. The same police force that doesn't give two shits about queers. I don't want, in any way, to de-legitimize the experience of trans people who are victims of hate crime—or those of us who live with the fear every day of being hate crimed. These are very real forms of violence that terrorize us and our community. What I want to say is that we must begin the work of building meaningful alternatives to dealing with violence besides more violence. Imprisonment and heavier sentencing is not the answer to dealing with violence against trans and queer people. The prison industrial complex fails every day to reduce violence. That is not its goal and it never has been. Its only goal is more imprisonment, more violence, more fear, for more profit. We live in a world where the US empire profits off our struggles and wants us to remain afraid. The capitalist system depends on it.

I do not have the an-

swer as to how to deal with violence. What I can say, however, is that it is time for us to recognize that all forms of violence and oppression feed off each other. Single issue politics will not bring us real liberation. I once heard someone say, "single-issue politics doesn't work, because we're not dealing with single-issue oppressors." It is time for those doing work to end gender and sexual violence to recognize the systemic racism and classism in the prison system in order to see that these are not viable options. It is time for straight cisgender people doing work to end the violence of the prison system to take up the burden of helping to end violence against trans and queer people. Ultimately, I have faith that we can work together to smash the systems of violence that oppress us all.

So, for these reasons, I am honored to be here today to commemorate those who have fallen in all of our various struggles. Whether it be against US empire, defending the rights of immigrants, working to abolish prisons, or demanding the right to walk safely down the street, we all fight every day in our own ways. But more importantly, I want to celebrate those of us who are alive and still fighting. I want to end on a positive note here by recognizing

and celebrating all of our various differences while we simultaneously recognize and celebrate our common shared humanity.

Human beings are fragile creatures, and it is only through mutual support, through love, through compassion that we can really make it through this world together. Trying to make it through this world and survive has been a spiritual process for me, and naming myself has been yet another step on a journey that will last until the day I die. We each have our own unique journeys, and it just so happens that we have been blessed today to each cross paths being in the same room at the same time. Some of us are born being told we're a woman, and later decide we're actually men. Some of us are born being told we're a man, and later decide we're actually women. What's true throughout, though, is that it is only deep inside here (heart) that we can really name ourselves, that we can find our own paths along this fucked-up beautiful journey called life. But for each of us that blazes another path, we can know that we have helped make the struggle a little easier for those who will come next.

TRAINING COMMUNITIES TO BASH BACK

SELF DEFENSE AND SELF DETERMINATION

by Ariel M.

In case you haven't heard, the recent upsurge in anti-queer violence has been matched by a radical queer/trans insurgency. We are everywhere. One name that we use, in Chicago, Philly, DC, Memphis, Minneapolis, Denver, Lansing, Olympia, and elsewhere, is Bash-Back! We are militantly organizing for our collective liberation. We seek to destroy patriarchy, white supremacism, heterosexism, transphobia, capitalism, and all the rest. Because of the prevalence of anti-queer violence, many queers are talking about organizing for self defense. In doing so, we are drawing from a fabulous history of queer self defense (Compton Cafeteria, Stonewall), and models of self defense organizing (Black Panther Party). We are also influenced by the models of self defense organizing developed to confront domestic violence and sexual assault against wimmin - the largest by far being Rape Aggression Defense (RAD). This is a model that has certain strengths, but also needs to be radically restructured.

Two years ago I participated

in a semester-long self-defense (SD) class that was (is) offered free of charge to students at the small liberal-arts college I went to. The instructor was RAD-certified like hundreds of other instructors who are part of the national "women-only" self defense network, mostly based in martial arts centers and police departments. Taking the class for free, in my free time, and for credit, I was directly benefitting from the white and middle-class privilege that had given me access to college in the first place. I took the class because it was available to me and because I knew that when I transitioned from male to female in the near future, I was very likely to be targeted by gender violence. I was not out as trans in the class - I passed as male - but I took it because I was trans, and this shaped my experiences as much as my whiteness did. (In spite of RAD's official "women-only" stance, my instructor opened the class to everyone. People perceived as male, as you'll see, were instructed differently.)

What struck me then - even more so now - is the failure for a model of SD based on straight wim-

min's experiences to address the needs of queer, trans, and gender-queer people. The RAD model of self defense is "for women," and while their definition of womyn is unclear from their materials, it is clear from their model that they have no sense of queer and trans people and the violence we face. The instructor would occasionally turn to me and inform me that, if we were learning SD for men (RAD model), instead of being assertive and strong (to confront an attacker who assumes their target is vulnerable), she would teach me to de-escalate, calm down the attacker, and try to make myself seem less of a threat (you know, like, "Hey it's cool man, I didn't know she was your girlfriend. Let me buy you a beer. No hard feelings, okay?"). Thankfully, I mostly received RAD's training "for women," but clearly the binary-gendered self defense model that RAD uses was developed for people with normative genders.

The instructor and about two-thirds of the participants in that class were white. There were several wimmin of color taking the class. Yet I cannot re

member a single time that race was discussed during the class, even though class time was split 50/50 between education and physical training. At the time, I didn't think twice about the way the class ignored race, and I never talked to my classmates about it, so I don't know how wimmin of color experienced the class. I do know that I experienced it from a place of white privilege, which I now recognize.

It is from my position as a white, class-privileged, anarchist transpersyn that I want to examine the reality of gender violence, privilege, and self-defense in our culture.

An Analysis of Gender Violence

First, definitions. "Gender violence" is used to include violence against wimmin and queer and trans people. "Domestic violence" (DV) refers to any sexual, physical, or emotional abuse that is perpetrated by a partner, former partner, family member, or acquaintance. "Stranger violence" (SV) is a term loaded with racism within the white-supremacist ideology. I use it to refer to assaults on the street, perpetrated by strangers, usually against people of color (contrary to the myths), queer and trans people, and wimmin. "Institutional violence" (IV) is perpetrated by institutions - police, crimi-

nal injustice system, prison system, border patrol, ICE, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Planned Parenthood, foster systems, schools, and hundreds of other arms of the state, corporations, non-profits, and other (non-familial) institutions - mostly against people of color and the poor. "Trans" is an umbrella term for people who are targetted by transphobia because of their gender presentation, bodies and/or identities. "White supremacy" is used instead of the hierarchy-blind term "racism."

All violence is systematic. The political analysis of most SD classes - the one I heard in college, the one that formed the basis for a recent "anarchist" SD class at a conference in Laramie - focuses on the system of patriarchy. The analysis, if it's given at all, states quite accurately that wimmin are sexually assaulted by men at extremely high rates - about 1 in 3 wimmin will be survivors, studies say, and 99% of the perpetrators are men - and then leaves it at that. The next step is, "so we have to defend ourselves."

True enough. But the questions of which people have the privilege to defend themselves, what people face institutional violence, what people are prosecuted when they defend themselves against domestic or stranger violence, and what factors in addition to being a womyn affect a persyn's likelihood

of being assaulted, are usually left unasked and unanswered. These questions - and their answers - are extremely important.

In reality, as any good SD instructor will teach, most violence against white straight wimmin is perpetrated by partners, family, and acquaintances. Attacks by strangers and institutions disproportionately target people of color, queer and trans people, sex workers, and - with increasing severity - people who fit into two, three, or four of those demographics.

*A disclaimer: I know that this analysis is leaving shit out. I'm certain that ableism, fatphobia, ageism and every other form of oppression contribute to domestic, stranger, and institutional violence. I am deliberately focusing on white supremacy, heterosexism, and transphobia, and their intersections, to the exclusion of other perspectives. I am indebted to INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence and wimmin of color bloggers like brownfemipower for my understanding of The Color of Violence (as the INCITE! anthology puts it), especially institutional violence.

To illustrate the impact of the white supremacist state, as well as homophobia and transphobia, on situations of violence and self-defense, two recent examples:

On August 18, 2006, seven young African American lesbians traveled to New York City from their homes in Newark for a regular night out. When walking down the street, a man sexually propositioned one of the women. After refusing to take no for an answer, he assaulted them. The women tried to defend themselves, and a fight broke out. The women were charged with Gang Assault in the 2nd degree, a Class C Felony with a mandatory minimum of 3.5 years. Patreese Johnson was additionally charged with 1st Degree Assault. Three of the women accepted plea offers. On June 14th, 2007 Venice Brown (19), Terrain Dandridge (20), Patreese Johnson (20), and Renata Hill (24) received sentences ranging from 3 1/2 to 11 years in prison.

- quoted from free the new jersey 4 blog webpage, <http://freenj4.wordpress.com>, accessed 12/6/2008.

In June 2008, Duanna Johnson, a transgender woman, was arrested in Memphis, TN on a prostitution charge. Memphis Police Officer Bridges McRae called her a "he/she" and a "faggot," and then beat her while Officer J. Swain held her down. The beating was video taped and Duanna was in the process of suing the city of Memphis, TN for police brutality. She was found murdered in an alley on November 9, 2008, while the

lawsuit was still in process. - paraphrased from Between The Lines News, issue 1646, 11/13/2008.

Any analysis of gender violence that fails to acknowledge and deal with white supremacy, heterosexism, and transphobia is incomplete. But, and this is far worse, a self-defense class that fails to acknowledge the state's criminalization of POC self-defense, and the extent of state-perpetrated or state-sanctioned gender violence - in response to

An anti-racist SD perspective is not just about the defense of the self, but the defense of the community, and the defense of people (especially of color)'s right to defend themselves.

which (traditional) self-defense is simply not an option - simultaneously privileges white people, erases the experiences of people of color, and leaves the state's white supremacy unchallenged. In a standard SD class, white privilege is nothing if not foundational.

This is not to say that people of color cannot or should not

defend themselves against violence. On the contrary, this author is inspired by and supportive of organizations like the former Black Panther Party. The point is that people of color often face different forms of violence, which calls for different models of self-defense. This reality is just as apparent to people of color as it is ignored by white people.

Part of what this means for white people is that, any pro-SD stance by white folks has to account for white privilege and stand in solidarity with people of color. An anti-racist SD perspective is not just about the defense of the self, but the defense of the community, and the defense of people (especially of color)'s right to defend themselves. A white person who believes in her own self defense but chooses not to take action in support of the NJ4 reinforces a system that mandates who may defend herself (white wimmin), and who may not (wimmin, queer, and trans people of color).

To add insult to injury, most SD classes construct situations, stories, and for-practice encounters that reinforce white supremacist stereotypes. Even after all the talk about acquaintance rape, when it comes down to the moves you learn and the situations you go over, the perpetrator is cast as a stranger who, targeting your body or your money, at

facks you on the street. In the SD class I took, which was led by a white womyn, my "final exam" was to defend myself against a man who came at me from behind while I was using an ATM, attempting to steal

It should come as no surprise, then, that RAD self-defense classes are taught by police departments to civilian wimmin. Rather than challenging the state, these classes reinforce the state's unwritten rules about who may defend herself, and how, and who may not.

my money. These situations are calculated, in the white supremacist imaginary, to play into stereotypical images of black or brown muggers and black rapists. I know that it works this way because that's how it works in my own head, and my white-supremacist social conditioning is largely the same as other white people's. These situations were even repeated at the "anarchist" SD class I alluded to. It was led by a white man, so this

should not be too surprising. A friend of mine called out this racism in a letter to the organizers, and their response did not even mention race, even while it went on and on "responding" to our concerns about transphobia and disregard of survivors' needs (casting both as our "personal issues").

In gender violence lie the intersections of all of the following forms of oppression, among others: sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, white supremacism (white people have the privilege of self-defense; people of color SD is criminalized), classism (homeless people and sex workers face especially high levels of violence), nationalism, imperialism, and incarceration (gender violence being especially prevalent around borders, war, and in jails & prisons). Finally, it is important to point out to the anarchist audience of this zine that mass actions, especially controlled "riots," tend to leave ripples of sexual assault and other forms of domestic violence in their wake.

The white-supremacist state has drawn a line between two kinds of self-defense: the state-sanctioned, even state-taught self defense of privileged people, and self defense that is criminalized because of the long history of oppressed people's resistance to the US, and the radical threat it poses to

the state. This second kind of self defense has its roots in black struggles against slavery, indigenous struggles for land and survival, slave rebellions, indigenous uprisings, the Underground Railroad, the Black Panther Party, and the American Indian Movement. Currently, most of the wimmin on death row were convicted of killing their abusers. About half are wimmin of color.

Two final critiques of mainstream self-defense classes. One is their (not sliding scale) financial cost, which makes them prohibitively expensive to many people, and institutionally classist. The other is their general lack of analysis, which removes the context of violence so that wimmin learn SD as if violence were random rather than systematic, and as if it were inevitable. This makes SD the responsibility of the individual, even reinforces victim-blaming, rather than understanding root causes and advocating the dismantling of patriarchy and other systems of oppression.

It should come as no surprise, then, that RAD self-defense classes are taught by police departments to civilian wimmin. Rather than challenging the state, these classes reinforce the state's unwritten rules about who may defend herself, and how, and who may not.

Suggested Models for Self Defense Organizing

It should be noted before I continue that my ideas and models for SD organizing are just theoretical at this point. Also (again), I am white, and there are people-of-color-led groups that have developed models of self-defense organizing. If we are going to organize self defense, we need to take more direction from people of color than from this white author. As this goes to the editor, I am awaiting the text of a SD model developed by an INCITE! group in Michigan, which I am sure will force me to rethink my ideas.

What would a self-determination model of SD look like? The organizers would gather a group of interested people without pre-determining a syllabus, and prioritize the communities that face the most systematic violence. The instructor(s) of the class would be those who have martial arts skills to share, and would not have any greater decision-making power. In fact, all participants would become instructors as individuals' skills with, say, dealing with transphobia or queer-bashing would be greater than a straight instructor.

The first time the participants come together, the participants would pool their experiences and posi-

tions, sharing what situations they want to learn SD for, what situations disempower them and what kinds of violence they face or are at risk for. Their answers form the basis for the training syllabus, for example: acquaintance rape situations, abusive relationships, queer bashing on the street, bathroom confrontation of trans people, police harassment, workplace sexual harassment, and cat-calling.

Class time and energy covers three areas: analysis/intellectual, training/physical, and advocacy/political. In analysis we learn about and discuss oppression and different forms of gender violence (domestic, stranger, institutional). In training we skill share tactics for responding to the situations we are concerned about and asserting our boundaries. And in advocacy we organize in support of self-defense and for the decriminalization of people of color SD (e.g. NJ4 support) and resistance to the state and other institutions that participate in gender violence (for a starting point, see the INCITE! anthology *The Color of Violence*).

This model ensures that the content of the SD training is determined by its participants, rather than the organizers/instructors, who are likely to have privileges that blind them to the needs of participants.

THE PATRIARCH A POEM BY BILLIE

the patriarch
threw those tear gas canisters
the patriarch
shot those rubber bullets

the patriarch
arrested me on that bridge
spat in my face
laughed at me for being
an angry feminist
a militant queer
a shameless adulterer
an impolite little girl
and threw me in a cage.

when that piece of concussion grenade
hit me in the head during
that march
I woke up and screamed
fuck you patriarch
I am all of those things,
and proud of it, too.



melting the snow:

a self defense workshop experience

Recently folks from BB! Denver attended an anarchist regional networking conference. The main speaker was Anarchist Jeff "The Snowman" Monson of the Ultimate Fighting Championship, who was also going to lead a self defense workshop. BB! Denver had been talking a little about organizing some rad self-defense for us queers and trannies, so we were interested to attend the workshop, learn from an anarchist fighter, and see how they handled all the issues that are entangled with the topic of "self defense."

We came away from that workshop extremely disappointed and disturbed (if not very surprised) by the fact that there was a negligible amount of analysis during - or seemingly in the design of - the workshop. We had some serious concerns and critiques of the whole thing, which we talked out amongst ourselves during the lunch break of the conf, and which we mentioned to a couple of the organizers with hopes of having a conversation about it.

Anarchist time being as it is, everything was late and delayed and there ended up not being time to talk specifically about the workshop (problematic itself?), so we wrote up our concerns and critiques as an email and sent it off to the organizers.

What follows here is that initial critique, and then the responses we got back from two of the organizers. Their responses really pissed us off. (Note that these views may or

may not express the opinions of the instructor of the workshop.)

We hope this can be useful for BB! Chapters, first in articulating some of the problems with "self defense" as it is normally talked about and taught, even in "radical" spaces (see also our other essay in this zine). And the responses we got are a crystallizing example of really how far we have to go even within our "movements," both around queer/trans issues, issues of race and white supremacy, and just in general with owning our shit when we are called out.

for defense and offense, Sissy Sparkle

[the original critique of the self defense workshop, written mostly by me who identifies as queer, gender-queer, and mixed latin.]

Last week, many of us attended the Rendezvous. We come from various places: unconventional denver, Fort Collins Uproot, BashBack! Denver (radical trans and queer folks), and/or an anarchy-feminist background. We are super-impressed with the Facing the Wind collective, got a lot out of the conference, and went to a number of good workshops. However, we do have a number of serious concerns we want to address, mostly around the self defense workshop (SDW) led by Jeff Monson.

To start, we'd like to say that we understand a couple of mitigating

factors. The conference was running late, so there was less time for the SDW than the instructor had planned, which obviously affects how well the topic can be covered. Also, we understand there was some miscommunication between the organizers and instructor about whether it was intended for all audiences or only for "women".

Our first concern begins with this latter point - that the schedule listed it as a "women's self defense workshop." Why was it gendered to begin with? What was the analysis that went into that decision? We assume the reasoning was to create a space for folks without a life of male privilege, and we can get behind that notion in many instances, but felt it was problematic for this workshop. The term "women" is a loaded one and feels exclusionary to many trans and gender identities. Those of us who are trans and genderqueer didn't feel comfortable to even be in the room, even though we are more frequently targeted by violence than those with normative gender presentations and identities. A more inclusive way to create such spaces would be use terms like "all self-identified womyn" or "trans-inclusive" or "womyn and transfolx". Next, if it was supposed to be for womyn and transfolks, why were there self-identified men participating and even leading the workshop? And why was this not addressed in any fashion at the beginning? It would have been extremely productive and liberating to have decided before we started - as a group

of those interested in attending - how we wanted the workshop to go. We believe the most effective, radical, and liberating way to organize a SDW is for the participants themselves to decide the structure, boundaries, the kind of situations we want to practice responding to, etc. Having had this conversation, then we could have all been clear on whether or not we wanted to or should have been in that space. We believe the intent was to create "safe" space of sorts, but for the reasons above it ended up feeling very unsafe, exclusionary, and in fact a little dangerous.

A final problem we see with the "women's self defense workshop" is that if it is not done right; If there isn't a lot of radical analysis around gender, patriarchy, race; In fact around the whole of white supremacist heteronormative patriarchy and the many oppressions it manifests; And specifically around rape culture in our society and in our radical communities; if these issues that cause and create the situations where "self defense" is necessary are not addressed. Then the work we are doing is not radical but rather a band-aid that gives womyn the responsibility of defending themselves without acknowledging and addressing underlying systems - like patriarchy, which must themselves be eradicated. Then how is our anarchist SDW any different than the one taught by the local "well-meaning" police department? (In fact, that's that PDs do classes - they reinforce systems of oppression in many ways, especially when classes have disempowering models and no analysis.)

When holding a "self defense" workshop, it's also important to acknowledge and critique the

criminalization of people-of-color self defense (e.g the New Jersey 4), as well as the racial aspects of violence - especially state violence one cannot defend against without breaking the law. That is, there are ways in which self defense is a white privilege, as well as racist in its imaginings of POC attackers against white victims.

Some specific examples from the class:

- The myth of stranger rape
The scenarios the instructor presented - and that the participants were to imitate and practice - were all of the form "the stranger big bad man attacks the lone weak woman". This is an extremely disempowering model to learn under, full of unexamined stereotypes. And it's not even very accurate since we all know that most violence, rapes, physical abuse, and sexual assaults occur not between strangers but between family friends lovers acquaintances intimates. To not address this reality perpetuates the number one myth that rape culture promotes. We also know that queer and transfolks are just as likely to face domestic and intimate violence as those in traditionally-gendered relationships. In fact, lgbtq folks are the ones more likely to encounter situations of stranger violence, such as queer-bashing in the street.

- No talk of consent or boundaries
Once the stranger attack scenario

was laid out and the instructor showed the moves for defending ourselves, we were to practice the moves with a partner. There was no time, space, or suggestion to check-in with our partners about issues of consent, boundaries, triggers, etc before doing these moves of physical closeness, vulnerability, power, and emotional trauma. In a room with survivors and folks traumatized and scarred - and probably perpetrators as well - to skip these conversations is negligent and potentially retraumatizing.

- The leg wrap-around move
For dealing with the situation of being on the ground with an attacker coming down after you, the instructor's suggested move was to reach up and grab the attacker between your legs and pull them down onto you and then also hold them tight with your arms. While this is probably a great move in a jujitsu match, it seemed problematic in this scenario. First to practice such an intimate move without knowing your partner's boundaries and triggers. Second to not address issues that this move might bring up for people. Specifically what that



move and position might mean for survivors, who are likely to be retraumatized in any attack, much less by having to hold a perpetrator tight between their legs. When a couple of us raised some concerns about this, we felt the instructor's response brushed aside our concerns and showed little understanding of the deeper issues involved. Further, we were taught how to get into the bearhug position, but not how to get out of it again safely.

We offer these thoughts with the hope that they'll be shared with the organizers, the SDW instructor, and the attendees of the Rendezvous. We think it would be irresponsible to continue doing Self Defense Workshops in the same way as the one that was done in Laramie, as hopefully our analysis above made clear. Some issues should be easy to solve, some will probably require some hard conversations about how to create the world we want to live in. If there is interest, we would be willing to facilitate a dialogue on the issues we've raised here the next time we meet. We hope that this letter can be a part of that conversation about how our radical communities can continue to change and grow - and be strong enough to tear down all the systems of oppression

[from an organizer who I'd assume identifies as female and white. -dkw]

I have a couple questions regarding your concerns- Why when Jeff asked "Is everyone comfortable trying this?" you failed to speak up? Why, if you were uncomfortable with the instructor did you even stay? Why not go to the free speech room and strike up a

conversation, or play ping-pong?, have tea in the front room? You may not be comfortable with every seminar you see and that is the nature of free speech. I spent quite a bit of time with Jeff and he is not the type of man I think you are projecting him to be. He is not sexist or homophobic- and he has been through a tremendous amount of personal pain. If you knew him you would understand how sensitive he actually is. He looks very masculine I know, and I supposed that probably triggered certain feeling in you- but you really shouldn't assume he is not considerate of others needs. There should be no issue with Jeff. He neither said or did anything sexist. Not everything will be pleasing to everyone in every possible way. This is the nature of the world we live. Thank you for your feedback, but please let's end this dialog.

[from an organizer who I'd assume identifies as male and white. -dkw]

First and foremost, we are very disappointed that men crashed the seminar, Jeff decided not to ask any one to leave because he felt (as you pointed out) the things he was discussing could be used by anyone. The idea to have it as "Women's Self defense" came about because we felt if it was just a "self defense" class it may prove to be uncomfortable for some people. Jeff is in high demand for his seminars and we felt this would avoid the probability of a testosterone filled room.

"It would have been extremely productive and liberating to have decided before we started - as a group of those inter-

ested in attending - how we wanted the workshop to go."

This is a bit disturbing, and frankly against the spirit of the conference. We felt that individuals should have the freedom to express themselves in ways they saw fit. We did not think it appropriate to tell people how to express themselves or dictate how they were to share their information. All who participated were allowed total freedom of expression. Jeff is a professional fighter, not necessarily a scholar on feminist literature.

"A more inclusive way to create such spaces would be use terms like 'all self-identified womyn' or 'trans-inclusive' or 'womyn and transfolx'."

This is unfortunate. I think the nature of the presentations and the atmosphere of the conference made it clear that the people attending would be accepting. If someone felt uncomfortable or unwelcome I think this reflects personal issues; presentors and organizers did all we could to make all feel welcome. As far as specifically stating self-identified womyn, trans-inclusive, etc... that was implied, if it needs to be explicitly stated, that is unfortunate. Also, several GLBT organizations were asked (practically begged) to present or at least table at the event, but they flaked out and didn't show. We wanted to offset Jeff's outwardly masculine presence with discussion of important gender issues.

As far as the "wrap around leg move"...Jeff is a world champion fighter, he knows what works. Some people may feel awkward doing this, but self defense can often be awkward. By nature it often involves intimate contact.

"If there isn't a lot of radical analysis around gender, patriarchy, race; In fact around the whole of white supremacist heteronormative patriarchy and the many oppressions it manifests;"

Again, this is not Jeff's expertise. Also, where does it end? Shouldn't we also discuss how meat eating reinforces ideas of male dominance and violence towards women? (see "Sexual Politics of Meat")It could get pretty silly and so much discussion would ultimately leave no time for the actual self defense.

"No talk of consent or boundaries"

I even heard him state that participants should only do what they were comfortable doing. And partners were not assigned, so I think this puts responsibility on the individual to discuss boundaries with partners.

The very basic issue is freedom of expression. Jeff expresses himself through teaching self defense. I do not think it is fair to dictate his or anyone's way of expression. If he was sexist or homophobic he would not have participated. His presentation was simply practical self defense, called women's self defense because we wanted a safe place for women to learn impor-

tant, potentially life saving information. Despite the fact that some men invaded the space, I think it was still a safe place for women.

Furthermore, if women are uncomfortable with a man teaching women's self defense, they simply

should not attend.

This issue has bothered me tremendously as I think it will ultimately do more damage than good. I think the idea that groups should dictate how people express themselves to be abhorrent and against the principles of anarchism.

Open A poem by Billie

we called ourselves "open"
she said she liked the notion of
a pretty girl's open bed
where ever she roamed--
polyamory.

after I left for Olympia
on the phone I said
I found another pretty girl's bed
expecting
hoping
she'd be pleased

she sounded pleased

two days later she called
said she found another pretty girl's bed--
I was pleased
she said she was "in love"
a word we never used
I understood now
she was calling it off with me

polyamory is complicated
I miss her bright skin
and
inquisitive hands

this sucks

A LOVE WILLED QUEER

by jade cricket

A common cliché people proffer against anarchists, dissidents, and radicals from all walks of life is that we expend more energy articulating what we are against rather than what we are for. This critique was admirably confronted by the Green Anarchy collective, which suggested, "while we can certainly agree on some basic things are against... what we are for is virtually endless" (2004). "Rewilding," a key conceptual innovation offered by the anti-civilization anarchist perspective, encapsulates this attitude of endlessness. In a society where we are so often deluged with messages that we must "change the world," the philosophy of rewilding suggests we take an alternative stance and view our relationship with the world in an inherently positive manner. Rewilding affirms the beautiful, mysterious and profound nature of life and existence, concluding it's 'only' this dominant, civilized society that's fucked.

What nevertheless bothers me the term "rewilding" is that "wild" part is so rarely and directly defined. One of the more popular rewilding message boards on the internet defines rewilding as a verb, "to return to a more natural or wild state; the process of undoing domestication" (Rewild.info). Yet, this definition articulates nothing of this "wild state." This often leaves me with the impression that the "wilding" part of the rewilding is understood and all that remains is for us to move toward it. Many prescribe exactly this: a return to Stone Age existence. This entails a set of practices, often known as primitive or earth skills. Nascent rewilding cultures have articulated these skills much as not only physical, but also relational. And while these are important and even better tangible goals to undertake, they speak nothing of a very mysterious, thought provoking, and open-ended exploration which is not rooted in any particular practice: namely, our process of discovering what wildness "is" and what it means, both subjectively and objectively in the here and now.

Definitions of wild and wilderness

How have rewilders undertaken this exploration? Green Anarchy posits wildness as "the most refutable physical fact that we are capable of observing: the reversion of to wild form, uncontrolled by the domesticating grip

of (a portion) of one species" (2004). Martial artist and tracker Willem Larsen writes, "More than anything, to me, wild means free... To set free, means to escape dependence. To escape dependence, means to reclaim one's natural gifts. To reclaim one's natural gifts means to become interdependent" (Willem Larsen, The College of Mythic Cartography, posted March 1, 2007). Prominent blogster Urban Scout's asks "How can we define wild?" He answers by way of comparison: "The difference between a wild and free commensal (sic) symbiotic relationship and a domestic parasitic one involves the commitment to control or the will to have power-over rather than have power-with" (Urban Scout, The Adventures of Urban Scout, posted March 11, 2008).

What all of the above definitions share in common is their generality. This is undoubtedly necessary, as generalizations exist promote a basic, if not problematic understanding of a word, term, or in this case, the destructive tendencies of civilization and possible alternative modes of existence. However, in each case above, the writers invoke secondary terms (e.g. power, relationship, domestication) that are subject to more intense scrutiny than the primary term being defined. Domestication, for instance, has a precise scientific definition centered on human manipulation of animal and plant populations, but such definitions are rarely applied to humans themselves. This raises a number of open questions with no definitive answers: How do humans fit into the process of domestication? Are they themselves domesticated? How is this term biologically or culturally defined? Domestication is seemingly related to wilderness (it is what wilderness is not) but this circular play of mutually defining words does not reach toward lucid understanding.

Academics have focused on wilderness in the context of linguistics. In the first paragraph of his treatise *Wilderness and the American Mind*, environmental historian Roderick Nash notes, "Wilderness, in short, is so heavily frightened with meaning of a personal, symbolic, and changing kind as to resist easy definition" (1965, 1). Nevertheless, Nash traces the etymology of

the term “wild” to the early Teutonic and Norse languages (from which English developed), finding “the root seems to have been ‘will’ with a descriptive meaning of self-willed, willful, or uncontrollable. From ‘willed’ came the adjective ‘wild’ used to convey the idea of being lost, unruly, disordered, or confused... the Old English ‘deor’ (animal) was prefixed with wild to denote creatures not under the control of man” (ibid). Nash concludes that “wilderness” etymologically translates to “the place of wild beasts” (1965, 2) and further suggests that wild “is related to ‘wealed’ or ‘woeld,’ the Old English terms for forest” (ibid.).

American Indian scholar Jay Hansford C. Vest’s draws from Nash’s etymology, similarly concluding that wilderness most closely means, “‘self-willed-land’ or ‘self-willed-place’ with an emphasis upon its own intrinsic volition... A wild animal is a ‘self-willed animal’ — an undomesticated animal — similarity, wildland is ‘self-willed land’” (1985, 324). Contemporary dictionaries define wilderness as “an area essentially undisturbed by human activity together with its naturally developed life community,” “an empty or pathless area or region” (Merriam-Webster), or “uncultivated land” with “desolate character... in which one wanders or loses one’s way” (Oxford English Dictionary). Nash adds: “Any place in which a person feels stripped of guidance, lost, and perplexed may be called a wilderness” suggesting contemporary definitions of the term are equally informed by “the feelings they produce in the observer” (1965, 2).

While Nash readily admits our “feelings” of wildness may be subjective, he unwittingly separates humans from the possibility of embodying wildness, instead of merely experiencing it as something separate or “outside” of us. Neither does he challenge or specify contemporary understandings of wilderness as “desolate” or “being lost,” which tend to have negative cultural connotations. Vest’s essay also fails to make connections between “self-willed” and “being lost” in any positive manner, seemingly suggest they foreign, rather than primary conditions of our existence.

While both authors admirably explore the multifaceted definitions of “wilderness,” neither challenges the idea of a human/animal separation, nor discusses the possibility that humans as animals have been, are, and can be wild. These limitations need not be considered a failure or end. Instead, they lead us in other directions pathways for our journey to self-willed lands...

Wilderness as social: queer desire and love

Love is perhaps the easiest way to express and articulate the connections between queer desire and wilderness. Feminist and cultural critic bell hooks’ book *All About Love: New Visions* cites self-help author M. Scott Peck, who defined love as “the will to extend one’s self for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or another’s spiritual growth” (2000, 4). hooks’ calls love as an act of will, a choice, rather than something out of our control or responsibility. Love, she writes, “is most often defined as a noun, yet... we would all love better if we used it as a verb” (2000, 4). What we do is inevitably as, if not more important than what we say. This places hooks’ in close company with those who desire to rewild the English language through “verbing” our nouns, reanimating fixed concepts and turning them into processual-based ones (Anthropik, posted March 18, 2008). The expression of love for ourselves and others around is undoubtedly issues from the deepest self-willed, wild places within and around us. This is undoubtedly the “spiritual” aspect that both Scott Peck and hooks refer to.

Black feminist Audre Lorde’s landmark essay “The Uses of the Erotic,” traces the etymological origins of the term ‘erotic’ to the Greek ‘Eros,’ the personification of love in all its aspects (1984, 43). Eros/the erotic includes our romantic, sexual relationships with others, but does not hierarchically value such relationships above others. Lorde writes, “There is a difference between painting a back fence and writing a poem, but only one of quantity. And there is, for me, no difference between writing a good poem and moving into sunlight against the body of a woman I love” (1984, 46). Lorde speaks of a moment of joy, of rapture, experienced from within a heterosexist, patriarchal society. Lorde’s joy is a direct assault on social institutions (and their purveyors) that impose an implicit regime of love, defined as a scarce resource to be guarded, measured, kept and controlled. This reconceptualization of intimacy beyond heterosexual confines is a key contribution and critique that feminists have added to the larger conversation about love. This critique shows up in a number of diverse sources, from literature on the practice of alternative, polyamorous or open relationships to historical critiques of the nuclear family, marriage, and institutionalized monogamy. Such perspectives are vitally important to the practice of rewilding.

Ecofeminist author Chaia Heller further articulates Lorde’s notion of the erotic. In Heller’s book *The Ecol*

ogy of Everyday Life, she suggest the erotic contains both an implicitly anarchist view of human nature and "an ethical dimension, establishing it as a quality of being against which all our actions may be measured for ethical content and meaning" (1999, 85). Heller writes, "[I]f we were to demand from our everyday lives the same pleasure and passion that we hope to find in sexuality, then we would have to make some pretty profound institutional changes. If such institutions as racism, sexism, capitalism, and the state make misery out of our work in political engagement, in turn making a misery out of our social, familial, and sexual relationships; if hierarchy and authority inhibit the cultivation of creativity, participation, and pleasure, then surely, fighting to restore the erotic means nothing short of a social and political revolution" (ibid).

Ecofeminists have also exposed how wilderness has been socially, historically, and culturally constructed by dominant civilized cultures. Author/activist Greta Gaard shows how queers have experienced the brunt of such constructions. Christian-informed worldviews have defined queers as simultaneously natural and unnatural. They are associated with a conceptualization of nature as animalistic, less than human, and thus open to violent exploitation. At the same time, the dominant culture has defined queerness as an act that transgresses the natural order (Gaard 1997, 120). The effect, according to Gaard is "the 'nature' that queers are urged to comply to is none other than the dominant paradigm of heretosexuality" (1997, 121). This dangerous contradiction exposes the way human biases shape our perceptions of the world, and proves we cannot rest easy with generalized, unarticulated ideas of wildness.

Queer theorists have pointed out that sexuality is not mere a choice of bodily attraction, but a historically evolving, intellectually informed, regulated cluster of ideologies. The regulation of sexuality is one window through which we can view deeper, interrelated power operations such as ecosystem destruction, and genocide of entire peoples and species. The opening page of Eve Sedgwick's very-influential text *Epistemology of the Closet* asserts that any analysis of modern society is incomplete "without a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition" (1990, 1). The historical emergence of this sexual fault line is of "determining importance in the lives of people across a spectrum of sexualities" (ibid). For what is self-willed, what is joy, what is love, has no role in civilized society. Beyond regulation

exists an unspecified queer, chaotic anarchistic desire, which radiates far beyond the homo-hetero divide.

Sexuality and wilderness share a close affinity because they are both sites that ultimately elude and exhaust any intellectual explorations we may undertake. This does not render such undertakings fruitless. Rather, it is the individual process of discovery that allows us to name our self-willed places, beyond regulation, symbolic representation and ultimately, civilization itself. This is of both political and personal significance. For if we are to overthrow the present civilized order with the force of our collective will, we must be sure to do so from the deepest, wildest place of our hearts.

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Bash Back! Communique #666

Greetings ass-pirates and carpet-munchers,

As we're sure you've already been made aware, the newly elected president of the United States has committed to repealing the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy, and will allow queers to serve openly in the military. In the past, we at Bash Back!, have been extremely critical of queer military service. We've been known to refer to DADT activists as "racist, assimilationist fucks" or "imperialist tools" or simply "what fucking idiots". Those familiar with our past position on the issue will be surprised to learn that we have had a change of heart.

We are now completely in favor of queer military service! We have come to several realizations and applaud the repeal of DADT for the following reasons:

The military has BIG weapons. In our efforts to arm queers, BB! crews have been working to obtain insidious amounts of pepper spray and other self defense weapons. However, if our operatives can infiltrate the military, we will have access to bigger and better toys (not to mention the training that goes with them). We're already fierce as fuck, imagine us with military training.

After doing some research on the issue, we've discovered that right wing christians, politicians, and military officials are in consensus on the fact that queers in the military will completely compromise unit cohesion, battle readiness, and the overall strength of the armed forces. Being that Bash Back! opposes militarism, imperialism and ALL forms of state power, we are ecstatic about the opportunity to destroy the military from the inside!

We've been watching a lot of military porn and reading a healthy amount of "barracks" themed erotica lately. Needless to say we've developed a bit of a collective military fetish. Our walls are already covered in pre-cum at the very possibility of the orgies we can instigate once we're bunking up with a bunch of sex-deprived sailors.

In short, thank you, Barack Obama and the assimilationist gay establishment!

Truly yours,
the birds of a cumming storm,
Bash Back!

P.S. DADT activists are still racist, tools of empire.

P.P.S. Come to the radical queer convergence in May!





here is what i know.
bus stops in winter,
cold hands on your hot stomach.
i know kisses like sinking & i know
watching you.
i know wet weight against me,
the thick smell of sweat and stale come.
i know your hips in my lap and
my bones in your hands.
i know your surrender, the
child-like line between
humiliation and desire.
hitting sparks at the pace of train tracks
and tides. i know beauty so gentle it is paralyzing.
(i know kissing you when you are
so close it is just your inhalation.)

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